
Douglas E. Bowers
Executive Editor

For this issue:
Rick Reeder
Issue Editor

Brenda Powell
Managing Editor

Anne E. Pearl
*Layout and Production
and Cover Design*

Samuel D. Calhoun
Graphic Assistance

Cover photo:
Rick Reeder, USDA/ERS

Rural Conditions and Trends is published three times a year by USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). For subscription information, call ERS-NASS at 1-800-999-6779.

Rural Conditions and Trends welcomes letters to the editor as well as ideas for articles. Address editorial correspondence and inquiries to Editor, *Rural Conditions and Trends*, Room 2171, 1800 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-5831 (telephone 202-694-5398, fax 202-694-5661).

The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of public business required by law of the Department.

Contents of this journal may be reprinted without permission, but the editors would appreciate acknowledgment of such use and an advance copy of the material to be reprinted. Use of commercial and trade names does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by USDA.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity provider and employer.

Rural Conditions and Trends

1999, Volume 10, No. 1

- 2 Overview**
Key Changes Involve Transportation, Emergency Farm Aid, Training, and Public Housing
- 6 General Assistance**
New Impetus for Several General Assistance Programs
- 13 Infrastructure Assistance**
Transportation Programs Receive Big Funding Increases
- 18 Business Assistance**
Microlending Is Latest Trend in Business Assistance
- 24 Housing Assistance**
Federal Public Housing Programs Are Overhauled
- 30 Transportation Reauthorization**
TEA-21 Authorizes Record Funding for Highways and Transit Through 2003
- 36 Training and Vocational Education**
Training and Vocational Education Programs Are Revised
- 40 Emergency Agricultural Assistance**
Legislation Boosts Farm Assistance to Highest Level Since 1993
- 46 Tax Policy**
Additional Farm Tax Relief Among New Tax Measures
- 49 Regulatory Policy**
Regulatory Policy Affects Rural Development in Many Areas
- 57 Appendix A**
Rural Share of Selected Programs
- 59 Appendix B**
Data Sources and Definitions